DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 330 077 EA 022 796

AUTHOR Smith, Neil Stephenson; Acheson, Keith A.
TITLE Peer Consultation: An Analysis of Several Types of Programs.
INSTITUTION Oregon School Study Council, Eugene.
PUB DATE Feb 91
NOTE 37p.
AVAILABLE FROM Publication Sales, Oregon School Study Council, University of Oregon, 1787 Agate Street, Eugene, OR 97403 ($6.00 prepaid; $2.00 postage and handling on billed orders).
PUB TYPE Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142) -- Collected Works - Serials (022)
JOURNAL CIT OSSC Bulletin; v34 n6 Feb 1991

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Collegiality; Elementary Secondary Education; *Organizational Development; *Peer Counseling; Program Implementation; *Teacher Effectiveness; *Teaching Models
IDENTIFIERS *Coaching; Instructional Theory into Practice (Hunter); Program for Quality Teaching BC; Teacher Effectiveness Training

ABSTRACT

The term "peer consultation," like the term "teaching," encompasses many methods and strategies. Some confusion about peer consultation (often called "peer coaching") stems from lack of understanding about how these procedures use peers (fellow teachers) as observers, mentors, coaches, or collaborators. To dispel educators' confusion, this bulletin offers a comparison of several different peer consultation types. Chapter 1 describes major distinctions among four main types of peer activities: (1) peer coaching with focus on either teaching principles or teaching effectiveness; (2) peer coaching with focus on teaching models; (3) peer consultation with focus on either instructional fine-tuning and reflection or reflective practice and innovation; and (4) peer consultation with focus on organization development. Chapters 2 through 5 examine each type in more detail, using one or more examples of existing programs, such as Madeline Hunter's Instructional Theory into Practice, Carol Cummings's Teacher Effectiveness Training, Bruce Joyce and Marsha Weil's Models of Teaching, and the Program for Quality Teaching in British Columbia. Descriptions cover these programs' purposes, procedures, and research-based outcomes. All the programs analyzed have merit and require substantial staff development investments to succeed. (29 references) (MLH)

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PEER CONSULTATION
An Analysis of Several Types of Programs

Neil Stephenson Smith and Keith A. Acheson

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Oregon School Study Council
February 1991 • Volume 34, Number 6

OSSC BULLETIN

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February 1991 • Volume 34, Number 6

ISSN 0095-6694
Nonmember price: $6.00
Member price: $4.50
Quantity Discounts:
10-24 copies - 15%
25-49 copies - 20%
50+ copies - 25%

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Preface

This OSSC Bulletin is adapted from a chapter of a book in preparation by the authors. The working title of the book is *Reflective Teaching Through Peer Consultation*. It will draw on the experience of the writers, who both worked with the British Columbia Teachers' Federation over the past seven years in developing, implementing, and researching an inservice program for teachers sponsored by the federation in collaboration with school districts and volunteer teachers and principals.

During the past decade, several other programs that use peers as coaches or consultants have gained prominence. Our aim for this Bulletin is to point out distinctions among several types of programs so that educators can choose and plan more wisely rather than lump them all together under a common label.

Neil Smith, who is currently dean of faculty at Canadian International College in North Vancouver, B.C., went from teaching in B.C. schools to Simon Fraser University where he worked for seven years in that university's field experience program for prospective teachers. His Ph.D. research at the University of Oregon was on peer consultation.

Keith Acheson has been involved in the development of microteaching, systematic classroom observation, and feedback techniques, all of which were used in the peer consultation program that we studied. He is associate director of the ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management at the University of Oregon, which contributed to the development of this Bulletin.

Philip K. Piele
Executive Secretary

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Introduction

Several different collegial processes currently being used in many North American schools can be called peer consultation. Some confusion about peer consultation stems from lack of understanding about how these procedures use peers (that is, fellow teachers) as observers, mentors, coaches, or collaborators. The processes are often lumped under the rubric of "peer coaching," an easy, catchy term. Unfortunately such wholesale grouping tends to erode critical analysis by educators in regard to the substantial differences in these various practices.

At its most basic level, peer consultation can be seen as a way for teachers to exchange knowledge, insights, or understandings and to study the practice of their own teaching. However, this generic definition broadly includes radically different orientations that vary according to the interpretation of the various program architects, implementers, and practitioners.

The term *peer consultation*, like the term *teaching*, encompasses many methods and strategies. Just as it would be absurd to ask whether the general act of "teaching" is effective in causing children to learn, it is not productive to ask, in general, whether the practice of peer consultation is effective in helping teachers to develop professionally.

As educators, we need to discriminate intelligently among different peer consultation types. Such discrimination has not been prominent in the literature and there is little evidence that practitioners understand the not-so-subtle differences. Hence, this Bulletin offers a comparison of different types of peer consultation with the hope of reducing the confusion and misunderstanding about the various options. After some fundamental distinctions are described, we shall consider each in more detail with emphasis on one specific program that we have studied over six years of its development and implementation: the Program for Quality Teaching (PQT) of the British Columbia Teachers' Federation (BCTF).

Chapter 1 describes the major distinctions among four main types of peer activities. Chapters 2 through 5 look at each of the types in more detail,

using one or more examples of programs currently in use. These descriptions examine the programs' purposes, procedures, and outcomes, according to published research.

Chapter 1

Major Distinctions

The main differences among peer consultation practices can be addressed by four groups of questions:

1. Who initiated the program and who controls it? Was it mandated by district administration, decided by a democratic vote at the building level, or initiated by teachers.
2. Are the program outcomes "prescribed"? Is there an explicit intention to adopt a specific model of instruction? Is the model of instruction imported from external sources, or is it influenced by the teachers' knowledge and research of their own teaching?
3. From what psychological theory of learning and human development does the program operate—from a behaviorist, cognitivist, or humanist foundation?
4. By what criteria does the program evaluate its success? Is it evaluated in terms of student achievement, the degree of teachers' behavioral (instructional) change or its support for teacher professionalism?

The questions raised above will separate programs that we call *peer coaching* from those that can be called *peer consultation* in the larger sense of colleagues working together on what each teacher wants to change or improve, *not* what someone else wants.

Using the questions listed above, an investigation of the literature, and personal experience in the field as practitioners and researchers, here's what we see. We'll begin with an examination of the purposes and goals as stated by the architects of each of the types, noting possible discrepancies between these intents and those of trainers in the field and also the teachers who are actively engaged in classroom practice. Paradoxically, those who implement new ideas in the field often interpret them more narrowly and literally than the principal architects intended. The architects' theories are often more "liberal" and "broad-sighted" than are the practices one sees at the school level.

To really decide what the architects had in mind, one would have to know them as persons and know their styles of operating, communicating, investigating, and coping. We don't know that about all of them, but we know some of them and are willing to hypothesize about others. The last part of the analysis will examine what the research says about the effectiveness of each of the peer consultation processes, that is, how well they actually achieve their purposes as stated.

Introduction to Four Types of Peer Consultation

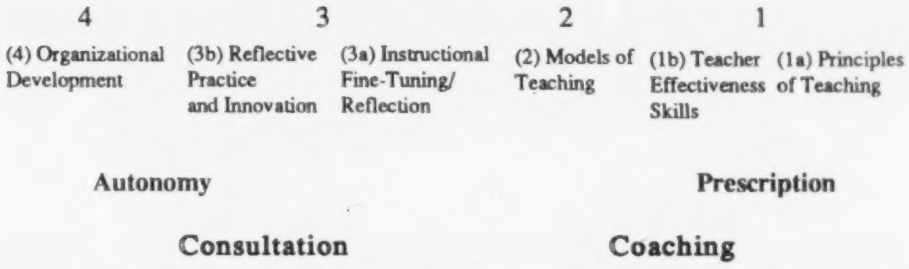
Several peer consultation processes operate in school systems today that roughly fit our generic definition. Within each of these types there are additional differences in purpose, theory, and intended outcomes. To assist in the analysis of the predominant types, we shall use the following categories:

1. Peer coaching with focus on (a) principles of teaching or (b) teacher effectiveness.
2. Peer coaching with focus on models of teaching
3. Peer consultation with focus on (a) instructional fine-tuning and reflection or (b) reflective practice and innovation
4. Peer consultation with focus on organization development

The types considered in this analysis range from processes that concentrate on learning and developing specific instructional skills (type 1) to processes that emphasize developing intercolleague communications and problem-solving systems (type 4). The first two types refer to their procedures as "coaching," which, as the name implies, engages teachers in helping colleagues to fine-tune specific skills or strategies of teaching. The last two, called peer "consultation" for our purposes, are less technically oriented in terms of their demand for a prescribed classroom outcome.

It is helpful to arrange the types on a continuum. At one end are the "peer coaching" types that predominantly prescribe scientific or technical approaches to instruction as means to school improvement. At the other end of the continuum are the "peer consultation" types that emphasize the development of social-interactive relationships and reflective processes designed to improve teachers' knowledge and understanding of their work. Another way of interpreting the continuum is to relate it to teachers' autonomy in instructional decision-making, moving from less autonomy on the right toward increased autonomy on the left (as shown in figure 1). Two of the major types have been broken into subcategories in order to accommodate examples that illustrate variations within the main themes.

Figure 1
Types of Peer Consultation



Type 1 (a): Peer Coaching with a Focus on Principles of Teaching

This category can be characterized by a program called Instructional Theory into Practice (ITIP), implemented in Napa Valley in 1982. It has been developed as a comprehensive system of instruction, based on a series of instructional principles drawn from a synthesis of teacher effectiveness literature by Madeline Hunter. The program promotes the practice of combining specific teaching behaviors to be implemented on the basis of established theoretical principles. Peer coaching, often initially performed by external consultants, then by teachers, is often employed as the central vehicle through which teachers learn to apply the system in their teaching.

Type 1 (b): Peer Coaching with a Focus on Teacher Effectiveness Skills

The main purpose of programs in this category is to build a bridge between the teacher effectiveness research and the classroom. An example is Teacher Effectiveness Training (TET) led by Carol Cummings. The training is designed to have teachers coach teachers to acquire specific instructional skills that have been identified through research as effectively promoting student learning. TET seems to pay less formal attention than does the Hunter-based program (ITIP) to theoretical principles that underpin the instructional skills. The implementation of TET also places stronger emphasis on the peer coaching system.

Peer coaching as practiced in these first two categories fosters relationships in which teachers are expected to be expert critics, guiding colleagues toward the adoption or refinement of specific teaching skills. The word *coaching* is aptly used in these programs, as it implies judging and assisting another's ability in specific skills, but it does not pretend to advance self-evaluation and critical reflection in teaching. Such programs are often

grounded in behaviorist theory, implemented through a top-down (central office) style, and evaluated by standards that are quantifiable, either through teacher performance behaviors or student achievement on standardized tests.

Type 2: Peer Coaching with a Focus on Models of Teaching

"Coaching to models" differs from the two examples in type 1 in that it begins by presenting an eclectic orientation to a broad spectrum of teaching possibilities. Once teachers have identified a specific model, however, the coaching function as originally conceived by Bruce Joyce and Beverly Showers takes on the characteristics of type 1 programs. The coaching process becomes a fundamentally directive activity, with one teacher providing criticism of another's teaching in relation to his or her ability to apply the steps of a specific model of teaching.

Abbreviated teacher inservice training sessions may shift the teaching partner's role to that of observing new teaching models in another's classroom without extensive interaction either prior to or after the observation. Attaining fidelity with the model seems to be the central goal. With communication between colleagues reduced, this method becomes more of a peer *teaching* model than a model of consultation.

Type 3(a): Peer Consultation (or Observation) with a Focus on Fine-tuning and Reflection

Unlike the types mentioned thus far, peer observation of this type does not operate within strictly defined instructional models or skills. Rather, it focuses on professional development through the teacher's eyes and is designed to promote opportunities for general reflection and refinement of teaching. Two archetypal programs are Jean Rudduck's British "Partnership Supervision" (Rudduck 1987) and the Palatine "Teacher-2-Teacher" program in Illinois (Barney Berlin and others 1987). Rudduck states that this process is to be used exclusively for professional development among peers.

Type 3(b): Peer Consultation with a Focus on Reflective Practice and Innovation

This type combines a number of the elements of the foregoing examples and is best exemplified by the Program for Quality Teaching (PQT) of the British Columbia Teachers' Federation. First, it employs the technical functions of analysis of teaching found in clinical supervision and peer observation types. It combines this with the perspective underlying the "models of teaching" type— that an eclectic approach to teaching is best. Finally, it relies upon the development of teachers' critical self-analysis of their personal understanding of curriculum and instruction and their roles as teachers.

Collegiality and reciprocity are seen as important support systems. In direct contrast to the examples given thus far, this type places more emphasis on the processes of building collaborative working relationships among peers and less on learning a system of specific instructional skills.

Type 4: Peer Consultation with a Focus on Organizational Development

The final type we shall consider is Organizational Development (OD). At first the inclusion of OD may appear somewhat incongruous, given that its primary focus is on group development and not on instructional development. It is included in our typology because it concentrates on what may be one of the most salient aspects of peer consulting—the development of productive interactions between teachers, group problem-solving, and group decision-making for the purpose of promoting a healthy school climate for change. OD "teams" act either as peer consultants within their own schools or in the schools of other colleagues.

OD shares the basic principle espoused within all types of peer consultation, that the key source of school change and development rests in the strength of educators at the school level, and that teachers are in the best position to facilitate and negotiate the professional well-being and growth of fellow teachers.

To achieve this aim, OD proponents such as Richard Schmuck, Philip Runkel, Michael Fullan, and Matthew Miles suggest that healthy communications among teachers is a prerequisite for the success of specific instructional innovations. OD practice contrasts with all the other types reviewed in this analysis in that it emphasizes building intercolleague and group processes and does not direct teachers toward preestablished standards or intended outcomes. It is included because of its proven track record in providing the foundational support for different school interventions and its effectiveness in improving professional relations in schools.

Analysis of Peer Consultation Types

The following chapters subject each of the four types of peer consultation to three stages of analysis. The first stage involves the statement and clarification of the purposes of each type. Discrepancies have arisen among the purposes as understood by those who have conceived the processes and those who are in the field acting as trainers and users of the processes. Our investigation into the purposes of each type will disclose some of these discrepancies, which are evident in the literature.

Second, a discussion of the theoretical perspectives of the principal architects will involve two levels of inquiry: (1) What are their theories

about how *teachers* should learn? and (2) What are their theories about how *children* should learn? In cases where the theories are not made explicit, an attempt to interpret the theories will be made.

Finally, the analysis will look at what the research says about the effectiveness of each of the peer consultation processes, that is, how well the stated purposes are achieved.

Chapter 2

Type 1—Peer Coaching: Principles of Teaching or Teaching Effectiveness

This chapter examines two well-known peer coaching programs: Instructional Theory into Practice, which focuses on principles of teaching; and Teacher Effectiveness Training, which emphasizes teacher effectiveness skills.

Instructional Theory into Practice

The best known example of our first type is the Madeline Hunter-based Instructional Theory into Practice (ITIP) program, which promotes specific teaching behaviors applied on the basis of established theoretical principles. Within this program, coaching is seen as the means for helping teachers apply the select system of instructional skills in the context of their classrooms. Hunter does not call the Principles of Instruction a "model." However, if we accept Colon Beaton's (1983) definition of a *model* as "a whole new repertoire of skills," then ITIP can be referred to as a model. Certainly it is much more than a random collection of "principles."

Evaluation of Napa Valley Project

The Napa County implementation of the Hunter-based system has been selected as the archetype for this category because it was studied intensively by nationally recognized researchers over a four-year period using qualitative and quantitative research methods in two schools with control groups. The stated purposes or intended outcomes of the project were (1) to

develop specific teacher instructional skills based on the ITIP model, (2) to increase student engaged time in mathematics and reading, and (3) to increase student achievement scores in both math and reading (Stallings and Krasavage 1986). The goal of the coaching process was to ensure that the instructional skills were successfully transferred to classroom practice.

The learning theory that underlies Hunter's model has been most clearly represented in her "Principles of Instruction" that derive from what she terms "the science of teaching" (1977). Based in behaviorist theory and developed from a synthesis of results from empirical studies on effective instruction, Hunter's work has been evolving from its foundation in the original ITIP program. Learning and teaching are presented as technical, rational activities that demand teachers to identify the key variables in a student's program, manipulate them to change student behaviors, and reinforce the behaviors that are desired.

Behaviorist Orientation

The Hunter-based model for classroom instruction retains theoretical consistency when applied to the pursuit of "training" teachers in the instructional skills. The theory that guided the implementers' work in the Napa Valley Project is characteristically behaviorist in its orientation. First, it follows a staff development model similar to that of Joyce and Showers (1980), the essential steps of which are (1) introduction to theory, (2) modelling the new practice, (3) practice with feedback, and (4) onsite coaching (Stallings and Krasavage 1986).

Second, and perhaps more interesting, is the fact that for the first four years the coaches in this implementation were "expert coaches" employed by the project. They were available to coach each teacher twice per month. In status, they were neither peers nor supervisors. They were entirely separate from line staff. It was thought that teachers would eventually assume the coaching roles. Joyce and Showers (1982) stressed that they believed coaching was an appropriate activity for administrators, coordinators, and supervisors. The theory of the "expert" reinforcing the correct teaching behavior, however, proved to be problematic in the fourth year of the program, when the classroom teachers were expected to assume gradually the coaching responsibilities.

During the implementation, the instructional skills training workshops were intensive, averaging twelve release days per year supported by the twice-monthly coaching sessions. Teachers were trained thoroughly in the instructional skills, but no training or preparation was provided for prospective peer coaches.

Success Not Sustained

The program evaluators reported the results of the study on an annual basis. The outcomes revealed that the teachers experienced success in meeting the goals in the first three years, but in the fourth year student achievement scores in math and reading dropped to below those of the control groups (Stallings and Krasavage 1986). The teachers' use of "appropriate instructional skills" (Robbins and Wolfe 1987) also dropped significantly in the fourth year. Teachers reverted to former teaching processes, and the anticipated transfer of coaching responsibilities did not occur. Responses to the research reports varied.

Robbins and Wolfe (1987) defended the project by downplaying the significance of the research, noting a "stark contrast" between the quantitative and qualitative data, and stating that very positive changes had occurred in "collegiality, collaborative work, and shared responsibility for decisions in their schools." Stallings and Krasavage (1986) had reported that interviews and surveys indicated increased feelings of collegiality but dissatisfaction with perceived constraints of the Hunter model. Teacher "burnout" and disaffection were suggested as possible causes for the decline in student scores and teacher performance.

Hunter (1986) felt that her program had been misinterpreted and narrowly defined by the project; hence teachers had received a distorted adaptation of her theories. Her major concern was that the Principles of Instruction, the basis of ITIP, had not been properly understood and adopted. This observation lost some impact, however, in view of her lavish praise of the project the first three years. An earlier publication (Hunter 1979) had described teaching as a "series of decisions and the implementation of those decisions which increases the probability of intended learning." Perhaps the teachers had not been taught (or encouraged) to use the principles flexibly and were therefore unable to apply them within strategies of learning (other than direct, didactic ones), for example, discovery or inquiry methods. This phenomenon has not been limited to the Napa Valley, in our experience. The lack of flexibility gets reinforced when evaluators use the principles as a checklist for classroom observations.

Training of Teachers

The role that coaching of teachers played in this project is difficult to separate from the model of instruction that was being advocated. Teachers were trained in the new system in a manner consistent with the way students were learning, through controlled practice, feedback, and refinement. However, this process was not used to train peer coaches. Perhaps it was assumed that coaching with a colleague would be a natural extension of the principles of instruction or a simple mimicking of the modelling of the expert coaches

without need for guided practice, checking for understanding, or reinforcement.

Teacher Effectiveness Training

Another example of a type 1 program is Teacher Effectiveness Training (TET) led by Carol Cummings. It bases its desired teaching outcomes on the teacher effectiveness research of recent years and emphasizes a systematic process of peer coaching. One implementation of the program was intensively studied by university researchers in a district they called "Cragleaf" (a fictitious name). The staff development strategy can be viewed in the light of Fullan's "fidelity" model in which the instructional skills were not to be tinkered with or adapted by the practitioners at the school level.

Purposes of the Program

The purpose of Cragleaf's TET program was to help teachers adopt specific instructional skills as defined in TET. The purposes of coaching were carefully conceived. Whereas the Napa Valley project initiated expert coaching to guide teachers' learning, the Cragleaf District intended to "establish a network for peer coaching both among principals in the district and teachers within schools" (Peter Grimmett and others 1986).

The purposes of peer coaching were twofold. First, coaches were to help teachers learn and refine the instructional effectiveness skills. Second, coaching was seen as a process of empowering teachers by placing them in charge of their own workplace and working lives for the ultimate purpose of achieving "positive classroom and student self-concepts." Unlike the Napa Valley project, the Cragleaf designers did not assume the peer coaching process would be a self-starting, self-sustaining endeavor. It was systematically structured, and peer coaches were trained in the techniques of providing feedback.

In TET the theory underlying instructional skills and coaching skills is consistent with behaviorist principles. It concentrates on teacher-centered strategies of instruction with attention given to skill acquisition. The theory of coaching includes a unique "typology of conferencing" that includes different levels of colleague intervention. At the entry level, the observing colleague provides only descriptive or objective feedback to the partner. At what is described as the higher level, the colleague overtly judges the teacher's ability to implement the prescribed instructional patterns and skills correctly.

A program evaluation was completed three years after the project's inception (Grimmett and others 1986). It concentrated more directly on the

outcomes of the peer coaching process than on student outcomes. Much of the data came from structured interviews with teachers and principals. Many participants reported "improved professional competence, increased professional confidence, a growing sense of professionalism and collegiality, and a beneficial impact on students." On the other hand, many also stated that the process was "too time consuming" and required extreme effort and work at all stages, from initial planning conferences to feedback sessions. They remarked on the difficulty of establishing balanced relationships with colleagues, finding the process "threatening" and feeling "defensive." Others felt that the process was "formalized and contrived." Participants also criticized the process of having district supervisors train principals and having principals select teachers and actively engage in the process as "peer" coaches.

Resentment and Lack of Trust

Some teachers were concerned (as were some in Napa County) that the instructional skills program was constraining in its structure, with overemphasis on *direct* teaching processes. Their attitude about the coaching process, however, was different. Whereas the teachers in Napa County never expressed resentment about the project coaches, some teachers in the Cragleaf program felt betrayed by the fact that their principals used the same criteria for evaluating teacher performance as those in TET. When teachers had initially become involved in the program, they saw it as a different system of instructional skills that had been adopted for professional development purposes, separate from evaluation. Many resented the fact that they were having their formal evaluations based on their ability to implement the system, regardless of the situational context. Teachers were upset by the fact that some evaluators did not acknowledge the usefulness of different strategies of instruction. As one might suspect, having principals involved in "peer coaching" produced role conflicts. Some felt that it meant being both "player" and "umpire," simultaneously.

As in the Napa Valley project, the coaching process seemed to fulfill the technical side of its stated purpose with some degree of success; teachers practiced and refined their instructional skills using the TET model. Teachers were nonetheless reluctant to commit themselves to the process, despite the fact that they had developed skills for teacher effectiveness and peer coaching. The project was impaired by problems in relationships within teams and with the administration. Teachers' statements reflected that they felt threatened by the process. A lack of trust seemed to exist between the various stakeholders. TET also suffered from the teachers' perception that it was "laid on." The initiation of the project was district dominated. No input was sought from teachers for whose benefit it was intended. It can be concluded

that the program fell short of its second goal of empowering teachers through coaching.

Comparison of ITIP and TET

In both ITIP and TET teachers expressed resentment at being constrained by a model of instruction in which they felt little freedom to move. Although the theorists may suggest that Hunter's Principles of Instruction or Cummings's Teacher Effectiveness Training can be adapted to different methods of instruction, teachers seemed unaware of this adaptability and flexibility. This factor seems to have seriously impeded the successful implementation of instructional skills in both projects.

It is difficult to sort out how much bearing the teachers' negative disposition toward the instructional program had on their acceptance of peer coaching. Coaching and instructional skills are as inseparable as "curriculum and instruction" and defy serious attempts to isolate one from the other for the purpose of analysis. The low level of teacher commitment has emerged (in our view) as the primary problem that impeded successful implementation of the instructional program and peer coaching in both cases.

Chapter 3

Type 2—Peer Coaching: Models of Teaching

The principal architects of our example for this type of peer consultation program are Bruce Joyce and Beverly Showers, who have incorporated peer coaching into their staff development process. Their method of peer coaching is based on research findings that revealed the difficulties teachers have transferring new models of teaching from inservice workshops to the classroom. It promotes a process of peer coaching that is associated not with just one model of teaching but with several.

Eclectic Theory of Instruction

The general theory of instruction is more eclectic than those of either Hunter or Cummings and challenges teachers to avoid the dogma of any one model and to develop an ever-expanding repertoire (as described in Bruce Joyce and Marsha Weil's *Models of Teaching*, 1980). This perspective, however, shares some theoretical ground with ITIP and TET in that once the teacher chooses a model, it is adopted as an internally coherent system of instruction, to be implemented with a minimum of modification during the first several attempts at classroom application. The key difference is that teachers are encouraged to choose from a variety of models that cover a full range of learning psychologies. Teachers also explore the theoretical underpinnings of the model. But once a specific model is chosen, fidelity of implementation is expected.

The goals of this approach to instructional development and peer coaching are:

- to study the theoretical base or the rationale of the method
- to observe persons who are relatively expert in the model

- to practice and get feedback in relatively protected conditions
- to coach one another as they work a new model into their repertoire, providing companionship by helping one another learn the appropriate responses to their students, and figuring out the optimal uses of the model in their courses by providing each other with ideas and feedback

Following the observations, each teacher is encouraged to apply the model ten to thirty times before a reasonable level of skill can be expected.

Additional goals of peer coaching are (1) to build communities of teachers who continuously engage in the study of their craft; (2) to develop a shared language and a set of common understandings necessary for the collegial study of new knowledge and skills; and (3) to provide followup training that is essential for acquiring new skills and strategies.

As in TET, peer coaching in this model is closely integrated with the content of the instructional program; similarly, peer *coaching* is the term employed. Some insight into how the architects of this program interpret coaching comes from a quote by a university football coach: "We'll generally make you worse before we make you better"! The emphasis is on "overlearning" skills until they become automatic, as in sports where there is not time to deliberate before deciding. This implies training and regimen, controlling, directing, and judging.

Research Finds Few Long-Term Gains

The research on applications of type 2 programs, Coaching to Models, has produced mixed reviews. It indicates that peer coaching tends to facilitate transfer of training and helps to develop norms of collegiality and experimentation among teachers. Beverly Showers (1985) reported that teachers who are coached generally (not always) practice new strategies more frequently and develop greater skill in the actual moves of a new strategy than uncoached teachers. Earlier reports also gave evidence that coached teachers used new strategies more appropriately in relation to their own instructional objectives.

Robert Baker (1983), in a followup study, found that teachers who are coached by peers exhibit greater long-term retention of knowledge and skills with models and show a stronger understanding by demonstrating their ability to apply the models in different situations with different instructional problems. However, only *some* of the teachers used the model when *asked to do so*.

Beaton (1983) looked for evidence of institutionalization of change connected with peer coaching. He found that the training programs were successful to the extent that teachers were able to perform the behaviors that

they had been unable to do, yet there was little evidence that such behaviors became a part of the teachers' classroom routine. His study identified a pattern similar to that of ITIP and TET—significant short-term behavioral change, but little evidence that long-term goals have been attained.

Michael Fullan (1982) suggests that we consider three levels of change when examining school innovations: the changes in (1) learning materials; (2) learning activities, skills, behaviors, and practices; and (3) beliefs or understandings. It appears that the type 1 examples of ITIP and TET met the first and second criteria on a short-term basis, but did not promote change in beliefs or understandings. Studies of type 2 programs, Coaching to Models, have demonstrated that some shifts in teacher beliefs and understandings about teaching took place (for example, the teachers indicated they and the students liked using the models), but that long-term adoption of the models was not clearly demonstrated.

It appears that teachers experience difficulty making the transition from using a model in a rote-mechanical manner to a point where it becomes a smooth and natural part of their repertoire. The goal of "building communities of teachers who continuously engage in the study of their craft" seems not to have been corroborated by research. In the practice of peer coaching, where time is always limited, technical command of selected teaching strategies has taken priority over building group commitment and encouraging critical reflection.

Chapter 4

Type 3—Peer Observation or Peer Consultation with Focus on Reflective Practice and Innovation

This chapter considers peer consultation systems that move toward less technical and externally controlled models of teacher interactions. Programs that fall under this category are Partnership Supervision, the Palatine Teacher-2-Teacher program, and the Program for Quality Teaching in British Columbia.

Peer observation is different from previous types of coaching in that it is intended to provide teachers with skills of classroom observation to be used primarily as a source of professional reflection and refinement of teaching for self-selected kinds of professional growth. It has no formal affiliation with any specific regimen of instructional skills or models of teaching. In the types we have reviewed thus far, peer coaching has been closely linked to one or more specific instructional models.

Partnership Supervision and Palatine Teacher-2-Teacher

One example of peer observation is Partnership Supervision (Rudduck 1987). Although the word *supervision* usually implies evaluation, Rudduck points out that the process is designed exclusively for purposes of professional development "among peers." It borrows from the technical functions of clinical supervision; preobservation conferences, data collection, and

postobservation conferences are used by the teachers to help them analyze their teaching.

Another program with almost identical purposes is the Palatine Teacher-2-Teacher (T-2-T) developed by the Palatine school district in Illinois (Berlin and others 1987). The architects stress that there is also a political side to peer consultation, that teachers gain a sense of "empowerment" and control over their own situation. They also propose that staff development should be planned by teachers at the building level so that they will feel ownership and be more likely to participate enthusiastically. Moreover, only teachers should be involved, and participation is voluntary. They do not *criticize*; they report "This is what I saw," not "This is how it should be."

It seems clear that with these two examples we have passed from what Thomas Sowell (1987) would call a "constrained" vision of what teachers are supposed to do into an "unconstrained" vision of their potential. He cites many examples from politics, economics, law, and other domains of the social order in which influential thinkers line up on one side or the other of this division of views about human nature. The constrained view would see teachers as limited in their capacity to be self-analytic and reflective, whereas the unconstrained vision would picture them as burgeoning with potential and yearning to improve themselves as responsible professionals.

Research reports indicate that teachers welcome the process but still have fears that opening themselves to help from others may make them vulnerable to having classroom events shared indiscreetly in the faculty room. Reports of reduced feelings of isolation after a year of operation reveal the other side of that coin. To learn of the possibilities for building trust and commitment over a longer period of time, we turn to another example.

Program for Quality Teaching

Another type 3 example is the Program for Quality Teaching (PQT) of the British Columbia Teachers' Federation. The federation conducted its first training sessions in the summer of 1986, but the program had been under development within the federation for at least two years before that. We have called it *Peer Consultation: Reflective Practice and Innovation* in our typology. Because we participated in the development, implementation, and research activities of this project, we shall describe it from the perspective of participant observers rather than as dispassionate analysts.

Reciprocal Relationships

The goals and purposes are closely related to the other two type 3 examples just given. PQT differs from the others in the emphasis that is

given to the interactive process in the peer conferences. It stresses that teachers become adept in the use of nonjudgmental and noncritical discourse in their work with colleagues. This is not easy for teachers who are used to evaluating, correcting, and controlling others in their work with students. The reciprocal relationship between consultants in this program, however, brings home the inherent defensiveness that teachers feel about their own efforts and, vicariously, those of colleagues.

PQT accepts the theory that any judgment of a colleague's work tends to diminish the likelihood of self-evaluation and undermines the confidence and trust necessary for a teacher to take risks in experimenting with new solutions. We have hypothesized that in other programs instructional strategies perceived as prescriptive by the participants may have inhibited their acceptance and diminished the zeal with which teachers applied them. Adding a bossy nurse to a bitter pill is unlikely to lead to continued use once the patient is released. Teachers who have been in this program for four years tell us that they have built a level of trust that allows them to be much more direct in giving feedback than could have been tolerated at the start.

The success or failure of a program that relies on peer coaching or peer consultation is probably more dependent on the inner workings of personal relationships than it is on the external, structural arrangements. These inner workings are difficult to tap. In our case, we visited a number of the schools during the first years of the program, met with teachers in groups and individually, in addition to surveying all participants via a questionnaire. Smith recorded, transcribed, coded, and analyzed many interviews and meetings as well as observing a number of preobservation and postobservation conferences and making classroom observations along with the peer observer. Acheson revisited three of the original four districts at the end of the fourth year of operation and interviewed individuals who were still actively involved in the program. A questionnaire similar to the one used the first year was circulated during the fourth year and the returns have been analyzed by Paul Goldman at the University of Oregon.

The Psychology of Coaching

Ruth Wade (1984-85), summarizing an analysis of a large number of inservice teacher education studies, considered coaching to be one of the factors that could positively affect programs, but found that it was a much more sensitive process than it might appear to be at first glance. In a study of 225 organizations (schools and businesses), she found coaching to be "only moderately effective." She cited the importance of the psychology of coaching as an often neglected consideration that can lead to failure in the field of management. She suggested four reasons why coaching might fall short of its potential as a development technique:

- The coach and the trainee rarely have the psychological time to develop the kind of relationship based on mutual respect that is necessary for coaching.
- Because there usually is not much tolerance for giving people much time to grow, the coaching relationship is often impaired by pressure from superiors to get information from coaches that might be used against the trainee.
- Coaches often do not know how to foster independence; therefore, quick solutions are sometimes proposed that do not fit the complexity of the problem.
- The coaching situation is in danger of being blocked by the universal feeling of rivalry and its accompanying fears.

Wade's observations shed light on what we were able to learn from our analysis of the applications of peer coaching within ITIP and TET in chapter 1 and Models of Teaching in chapter 2. There appeared to be little time devoted to helping teachers develop supportive channels of communication and problem-solving procedures. Instead the processes that were employed fostered teachers' dependence on externally driven theory and techniques, not the development of mutual respect and trust for each other. The personal and interactive practices necessary for an environment where critical reflection could be practiced seem incompatible with the design and intents of peer coaching.

Communication Skills

Judith Warren Little (1985), writing on "the delicacy of collegial leadership," emphasizes the importance of developing reciprocity in collegial relationships:

> Skillful pairs build trust by acknowledging and deferring to one another's knowledge and skill and by talking to each other in ways that preserve natural dignity, and by giving their work together a full measure of energy, thought and attention.

Certainly to achieve this level of communication, healthy group dynamics and interpersonal communications are essential. Ironically most people have a healthy (albeit, at times, false) perception of their personal skills in communication. It is a common misunderstanding that good communication means simply the ability to articulate one's ideas clearly. Teachers, indeed, are paid to spend most of their time actively instructing, directing, and judging the work of others. They are in the role of expert-helper. Unfortunately, the range of interactions typically found in this kind of relationship with others does not lend itself positively to the peer consultative mode, which requires respect for and understanding of another's ideas,

beliefs, and teaching abilities. In our culture, a person's teaching is conceived to be both individual and personalized. Hence, it should follow that if a teacher is working intensively with a colleague, the utmost in sensitivity is needed to foster a safe and productive climate for their work together.

This perspective lies in stark contrast to the analogy of the football coach who needs to have his ducks pretty well in line and following the prescribed behavioral patterns before the "skill players" break out into their individualized accomplishments. (The reference to football players as "ducks" is not a mixed metaphor in at least one institution with which we are familiar.) Teachers have never responded well to patronizing attitudes from anyone, especially peers. Advocates of peer coaching suggest that nearly any teacher who has been through a training process can learn to provide feedback to another teacher. Perhaps this is true, but surely the success of the process relies on more than the technical act of giving feedback. Descriptive feedback provides only the starting point from which teachers can begin to create a dialectical process of inquiry, self-criticism, and consequent restructuring of teaching.

What are the implications for peer consultants? Beaton suggests they may need the same communication skills as trainers:

> Although trainers, by their use of coaching, have closed the gap between solution-giving and process-helping consultancy, there is still a need for practitioners, either individually or more desirably as a team, to combine organization development and teacher professional development strategies and skills. This seems particularly necessary if peer coaching is to become established.

PQT's architects suspected that the most important function of the *inner game* of peer consultation may be found in a teacher's ability to engender trust, confidence, and respect while working with colleague partners. If teachers subscribe to the importance of this condition, then they must be given the time to build strong and trusting relationships before they can be expected to excel in collegial development and critical analysis of teaching.

Theoretical Perspectives

PQT has made use of a number of theoretical perspectives. The committee, chaired by Mohammed Shamsher, that initiated the program believed that teachers should be able to:

> use collegial support to acquire greater personal control over knowledge gained about their own teaching, ascribing meaning to that teaching and learning what is involved in genuinely autonomous growth as a professional. (British Columbia Teachers' Federation 1986)

The intent is much like Rudduck's or Berlin's: that teachers themselves have the power to understand, challenge, and ultimately transform their practices.

One theoretical perspective came from clinical supervision (Keith Acheson and Meredith Gall 1987). The particular version used has been described by the authors as "observing as if you were B.F. Skinner and giving feedback as if you were Carl Rogers." Most of the facilitators and some of the participants were familiar with this approach through the programs of their regional universities.

Another theoretical perspective came from Ted Aoki, who took part in the training sessions. This highly respected Canadian educator and senior statesman encourages teachers to think about their own teaching on three levels: technical, theoretical, and existential. In this light, peer consultation becomes legitimate for teachers who are seeking a more personal understanding of their own teaching and relationships with students, without feeling they have to strive for a prescribed set of specific teaching behaviors.

PQT, then, is the result of a blend of these theories. It is based on the belief that teachers can bring to their teaching a heightened sense of awareness and critical reflection without stringent control measures imposed from above.

Donald Schon (1983) suggests that professionals are profoundly, but often unwittingly, aware of the decisions they make in their practice. His notions of "reflection-in-action" and "reflection-on-action" are attempts to bridge the gulf between theory and practice of professions:

> As the professional moves toward new competencies, he gives up some familiar sources of satisfaction and opens himself up to new ones. He gives up the rewards of unquestioned authority, the freedom to practice without challenge to his competence, the comfort of relative invulnerability, the gratifications of deference. The new satisfactions open to him are largely those of discovery—about the meaning of his advice to his clients (his students), about his knowledge-in-practice, and about himself. When a practitioner becomes a researcher into his own practice, he engages in a continual process of self-education. . . the practice itself is a process of self-renewal. The recognition of error, with its resulting uncertainty, can become a source of discovery, rather than an occasion for self-defense.

The proponents of PQT, both the architects (planners, developers, presenters, facilitators) and the doers (participants: teachers and principals in practice), see it as a blend of systematic analysis of teaching and their own intuitive understandings of professional knowledge. Through its structure they are able to practice critical appraisal of their teaching (principals as well as teachers), test new ideas, and restructure their teaching on the basis of

what they discover in the reflective process.

The intended outcomes are distinct from those of the peer *coaching* types since it is the teacher or teacher group that determines the goals and content of what is to be worked on using the peer consultation process. In the situations where it has worked best and persisted this is exactly what has happened. Where it has not persisted, other priorities have intervened (sometimes these interventions could be called "administrative intrusions").

Research results, based on our intensive efforts during the first two years of operation and on the fourth-year interviews and survey, can be summarized as follows:

1. Participants were almost unanimous in their positive reaction to the program. They expressed high satisfaction with the structure and content, with the support level from the teachers' federation, with district and building administrators, and with the impact on individual professional development and collegial relationships.
2. The numbers of districts, schools, and individuals have continued to increase, and districts have tended to send new groups in successive years.
3. It should be noted that, as volunteers, program participants were presumably predisposed to respond favorably; positive responses may merely reflect a strong fit between these teachers and this program. (Goldman and Smith 1991)
4. The program is not for everyone; not everyone volunteers. Some have not continued the program beyond their initial commitment, usually because of time pressures or job movement by the participant or a partner.
5. The unusual collaboration among the federation, the districts, and the teachers—all as stakeholders—has had a positive effect on the way the program has been received.

Given the nature of the goals of the program, the research has had to rely on teachers' reports of how it has affected them, either through surveys or interviews rather than through direct observation of behavior or quantitative measures such as tests. Paul Goldman (1991) points out that "there is inevitable distortion whenever people report on what they *used* to believe." On the other hand, "some of the change figures are striking. These teachers clearly believe they are closer to their colleagues than they were a few years ago," he reports.

Chapter 5

Type 4—Peer Consultation: Organization Development

The missing link in the implementation of the programs studied thus far may be found in the investigation of organization development (OD). It is different from the others in important respects, but deserves inclusion because of some of its unique aspects.

It differs because it is not employed as a safeguard for instructional performance (especially prescribed forms of instruction). Nor is it intended specifically to improve the technical or reflective capabilities of the classroom teacher. It does, however, specifically attend to the human relations skills that are critical to all types of peer consultation: exercising healthy interaction techniques, clarifying individual standards and group goals, and improving group problem-solving and decision-making.

What is OD? What are its purposes, theories, architects? What elements does it share with other peer consultation types? Richard Schmuck and Philip Runkel (1985) call it a sustained effort at organizational change over time that focuses on the internal dynamics of the social system. Michael Fullan and others (1981) described it as:

> a coherent, systematically planned, sustained effort at system self study and improvement, focusing explicitly on change in formal and informal procedures, processes, norms, or structures, and using the concepts of behavioral science. The goals of OD are to improve organizational functioning and performance. OD in schools has direct focus on educational issues.

It can also affect the system *indirectly* in ways that affect the structure. In a sense, the process amounts to overhauling the school's culture. Schmuck and Runkel (1985) note:

> The tenacity of a school's culture lies in the power of norms, how well they are adhered to, how resistant they are to change. Norms are

shared expectations, usually implicit, that help guide the psychological processes and the behaviors of the group members.

How then does OD accomplish organizational introspection that strikes at the center of the school's culture and unveils the school's norms and power relationships? Michael Fullan (1982) describes the general goals of OD: (1) To develop clear communication networks up and down and laterally; (2) to develop new ways of solving problems through the creative use of new roles; and (3) to involve more people at all levels in decision-making. Bernard Lubin and others (1979) add three dimensions to Fullan's goals: (1) To build trust among individuals and groups throughout the organization; (2) to supplement the authority associated with role or status with the authority of knowledge and competence; and (3) to increase the sense of ownership of organizational objectives. The last goal is often thought of as seeking a balanced understanding of the relationship between organizational goals and individual goals.

Some basic assumptions about the ways individuals and groups function in schools underlie the goals of OD. One premise is that a group cannot be treated merely as a collection of individuals. Groups take on their own characteristics. Changing the norms and culture in a school requires understanding the dynamics and character of the groups affected. Changing the subsystems within a school may be easier than transforming the individuals. Within each group, members' feelings and goals are still seen as important, but they must be viewed in relation to the overarching organizational goals.

Kurt Lewin, whose theories underlie much of the OD movement, held that organizations are shaped by interactions, not by structure. Organizational behavior is not static habit or custom but a dynamic balance of forces working in various directions. Changing the social equilibrium in an organization, like changing the course of a river, requires attention to all the forces and influences that are at work. The leaders in OD experimentation and research, after twenty years of extensive experience, conclude that these forces are best attended to through groups.

How is OD related to peer consultation as we have defined it? OD teams have worked most effectively as peer consultants with school staffs and subgroups by helping develop a strong base of organizational support for change and innovation. Unlike the previous types, which attempt to institute processes for conferences and observations involving pairs of teachers, OD uses groups to provide the setting and support for using descriptive feedback, problem-solving, and communication among several individuals rather than between just two.

How effective is OD, and under what conditions does it work best? Syntheses of the considerable research reveal that it has been responsible for facilitating significant long-term success in the innovations with which it has

been associated. The research shows that there has been success only in situations where all the basic conditions for change are present. Success is more likely when there is sustained support from top management, close partnership between inside and outside consultants, and participants who see OD as a continuing way of life. Where the emphasis is on personnel development focused on individual growth, the rate of success has been very low.

The implication for peer consultation of the kinds we have described is that, in addition to the pairs who observe and confer, there needs to be group support for the enterprise. In PQT schools that have sustained enthusiasm for several years, there appears to be this sort of group spirit.

Conclusion

All the programs we have analyzed have merit. There is merit in learning instructional strategies that are coherent and consistent with research on student achievement and teacher effectiveness. There is merit in understanding and being able to use a variety of strategies and techniques. There is merit in working closely with colleagues and getting supportive feedback from someone you respect and trust. Giving supportive feedback requires knowing how to observe systematically and communicate effectively in non-threatening ways. Receiving feedback from colleagues requires overcoming the natural defensiveness that teachers have about their teaching. An additional element appears to be necessary in many cases: group support beyond just one partner.

The implications for staff development are not modest ones. The amounts of training, practice, followup, release time, and other forms of support are considerable. Our first-hand experience with one of these programs tells us that the benefit is worth the cost.

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